TL201


# AIDE-MEMOIRE

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East Timor diplomatic & intelligence digest

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Comissão Directiva da FRETILIN • Comando das FALINTIL • Resistência Nacional Estudantil de Timor Leste - RENETIL


**FACT SHEET 1**

**EAST TIMOR: SOME BASIC FACTS**

**1) Brief Historical Outline**

: Territory covers 18 889 sq.km

: Population 700 000(1975 figures)

* The Indonesian estimate in 1991 was a total population of 650 000. This includes 150 000 Indonesian settlers who moved to East Timor after the invasion

: Portuguese navigators and missionaries first made contact with East Timor around 1511

: East Timor remained a Portuguese territory for almost 500 years

: It was never a part of what is modern-day Indonesia

: Indonesia claimed to be the successor state of the so-called Dutch East Indies - hence it never laid claim to East Timor

**11) Cultural and Ethnic Identity**

: The East Timorese are culturally and ethnically distinct from the Indonesian people of Java. The majority are Catholic, speak Tétun, and come mostly from the Melanesian stock though there are also some Malay-Polynesian groups.

: Despite obvious cultural and ethnic similarities with the peoples of neighbouring Indonesian islands, 500 years of Portuguese colonization has significantly influenced the development of the East Timorese into a distinct people.

: If one is to accept cultural similarities, ethnic kinship and geographic continuity as the basis for the annexation of a

**Address:**

territory and its people, questionable precedents may be set. Should Indonesia annex Papua New Guinea whose people are of exactly the same cultural and ethnic stock as the inhabitants of West Papua?(Irian Jaya). Or should Papua New Guinea annex West Papua?

: The Indonesian invasion and annexation of East Timor, if condoned, sets a dangerous precedent for the rest of the world and in particular for countries whose very existence rests on a scrupulous observance of the sanctity of colonial boundaries.